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AUTHOR Jones, J. B.
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ABSTRACT

This paper was based upon the thesis that there are environments which will effect positive relationships between people and will regulate their modes of thought and subsequent actions. It was further postulated that there is an ordering of values by rural residents and a corresponding urban ordering of values. In view of the foregoing, it was appropriate to ask, what is growth producing in respective colleges and universities? Six significant environmental factors were identified which must receive attention if an administrator is to be effective. They are: (1) physical factors, (2) academic standards and regulations, (3) scholarship and financial aid, (4) standards of personal behavior, (5) student activities and the university calendar of events, and (6) the interpersonal relationships of students and staff. In addition a discussion was presented of the techniques for influencing the environment. These included: (1) alliance with administration, (2) faculty coalition, (3) student involvement, (4) individual manipulation, and (5) modeling. It was concluded that the basis for further discussion may concern itself with influencing institutional environment, by whom and for whom. (Author/BW)

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STUDENT PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATORS AS INFLUENCERS OF INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENTS

by

J. B. Jones, Ed.D.
Professor of Guidance and Psychology
Texas Southern University
Houston, Texas 77004

Formerly Dean of Students in the same institution and formerly Coordinator of Student Life, A.M.&N. College---Pine Bluff, Arkansas

It is the thesis of this presentation that there are environments which will effect positive relationships between people and will regulate their modes of thought and subsequent actions. It is further postulated that there is an ordering of values by rural residents and a corresponding urban ordering of values. Likewise institutions of higher learning exhibit an ordering of values. These values are not necessarily taught in formal ways, but they are caught by the students or rejected by them in response to environmental pressures or influences. In view of the foregoing, it is appropriate to ask, what is growth producing in respective colleges and universities? Where will the students gather the human industry to fertilize society? What constitutes the roots of growth and what are they sending up—food or poison? It is clear that the desired growth of personalities will not come from rootless alienation. Nor will it come from institutional traditions and classroom tyrants.

Student personnel administrators stand indicted for having engaged in the day to day manipulation of personalities. Some accuse us of having perpetuated these acts because we were lacking in sophisticated techniques

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for dealing with the environments. The institution, a vague collective term, became our God. A once happy and respected professional group, student personnel administrators, is now stalking in institutional ruins and have descended from their previous status to paper tigers in route to the function of "garbage collector."

It has long been repeated that—Those whom the God would destroy, they first make drunk with power. This has been declared applicable to student personnel administrators of the past decade. It may be good therapy to confess that we engaged in fragmentation of student services which would never inspire allegiance to the whole. We were busy cutting bonds of attachments rather than erecting them. We became geniuses in social stratification as is evidenced by the membership of NAPSA and related organizations. Codification of rules of conduct, development of housing contracts, computerizing room assignments, and systematizing testing programs to effect accuracy in prediction of academic performance became the basis for claiming larger staffs and budgets. We became godly enough, perhaps ungodly would be a more appropriate term, to label some personalities entrusted to our training realms as high risks. The real truth could perhaps best be reflected by stating that many deserving personalities with possibilities were entering high risk campus environments with licensed assassins quartered therein. These descriptions all add up to the portrayal of student personnel administrators as a group of disrobed patriarchal symbols with deflated egos and exposed self interests.

If the foregoing charges strike you as sarcastic and void of accuracy, remember that they are not the creations of the writer by the accumulated responses of our colleagues over two decades. They, the

charges, do suggest that student personnel administrators must fashion for themselves new roles. I am suggesting that the most logical role is that of influencer of institutional environments. This involves identification and manipulation of experiences in the institution which have an impact upon individual development.

I choose to call to the attention of the membership of NASPA six significant environmental factors which must receive attention if an administrator is to be effective. They are: physical factors, academic standards and regulations, scholarship and financial aid, standards of personal behavior, student activities and the university calendar of events, and the interpersonal relationships of students and staff.

Physical Factors — The facilities and equipment provided in an academic community influences the kind of environment which students create for themselves. The design and equipment of facilities should give support to some personality needs of students and provide a counter thrust to others.[1] C. Robert Pace called attention to college evaluation rather than prediction of personal performance more than a decade ago. He devised the college characteristic analysis which is organized along two dimensions. The first dimension involves goals, objectives, or major emphases of the environment and the second part deals with the administrative community of the university or college as a whole. Special attention is given in the second dimension to facilities and equipment provided.[2] It is not unusual to hear personnel staff members remark as was done in a Louisiana College, "We missed the boat in the planning and construction of our student union building," or to witness the agreement by staffs and student bodies as illustrated by St. Mary's University in San Antonio, Texas

where they assert that a new institutional vitality and personality has come with the "new" campus which they now enjoy.

It is not my purpose to make a pitch for modern buildings and facilities which secure students from physical and moral hazards but rather to question the amount of research by student personnel administrators individually or collectively with other areas of specialties such that there are capabilities for inputs into the decision making for campus planning. The remark of an interior decorator stands clearly in my memory for he challenged my authority and ability to recommend the rejection of furnishing which he had selected for a campus that he had never visited and a student body which was totally unknown except for two representatives. The outcome is insignificant for the moment.

Michigan State University indicated several years ago that changes in dormitory hours in the women's residence halls of either of the Big Ten Universities would bring subsequent pressure upon it for similar changes in practices. Coeducational housing has come by default or capitualtion on our part rather than by identification and/or design of growth facilitating elements. Perhaps I am accusing student personnel administrators of having been manipulated by the pressures of their environments rather than significantly influencing them. I am fully aware of the pressures exerted by legislators, alumni, parents, administrators when the Board of Regents of the New York State University System decided to scrap plans for 400 million dollars worth of residence halls based upon cost and managerial factors? Was this their recommendation or did they merely begin their ardent task of "adjusting to the decision made by others?"

Chickering argues convicingly that because the college can control housing arrangements and the placement of students therin, it can create conditions that more effectively contribute to the freeing of interpersonal relationships and to the development of integrity.[3] If by housing arrangements he means location and design of buildings, I agree. If his remarks relate to placement of vending machines, assignment of individuals to rooms, and the traditional custodial functions, I reject these as contributors to the development of integrity.

Sizes of enrollments of universities should not trouble us as much as coherence or the lack of it. Coherence depends not upon size alone but on leadership, internal structure, and the educational style of the college.[4] The physical factors should reflect the educational style subscribed to, thereby promoting coherence.

B. Academic Standards and Regulations should be established so as to indicate student's present levels of development and to serve as stimuli to further development. Donald Brown made a study of Vassar alumnae in 1962 and developed an educational typology. He chose to designate the group thusly as:[4]

High achievers

Over achievers — individuals who earned high grades more by compulsive efforts than by a serious appreciation of intellectual life.

Under achievers — those who enjoyed college and grew intellectually without becoming seriously involved in academic work.

Social activity and peer group orientated

Seekers of Identity — that group of individuals who were primarily seeking to adjust to a social world radically different from the one they had known.

It is easy to identify which group will consistently perform well in academe. We can establish standards which will penalize the other groups because their goals are different. We may completely alienate one or more of these groups to such an extent that they become social reformers, a group which is highly visible on campuses today.

It is extremely difficult for me to understand how so many black students who rank in the first quartile of their graduating classes fail to qualify for admission to various institutions across the country or end up being dropped for academic reasons if they are successful in matriculating, while their athletic counterparts in the fourth quartile obtain admission to the same institutions and somehow remain elegible for competetion for four years. Are student personnel administrators aware of these practices which undermine the moral fiber of academia?

I must not be accused of asking that academic standards be lowered or eliminated to accommodate individuals who have been excluded from or on the periphery of higher education in the past. It is suggested that criteria for evaluation of these individuals take into account significant dimensions of diversity and the arrangements accorded after entrance to enable persons to gain in substance and significance.

High academic achievement is sustained by dispositions deep in the personality or by social factors that encourage the individual to achieve.[6] Grading systems and course requirements may operate to negate one's desire to test self in a variety of situations. Pressures in environments may make thinking for one's self risky and venturing into areas of weakness dangerous. It appears that high degrees of personal intimacy and social cohesion may be far more valuable in promoting academic achievement than

arbitrary grade point average requirements. Learning in a non-supportive college community environment is extremely difficult and for individuals with certain personal needs, significant learning may be impossible.

C. Scholarship and Financial Aid must be conceived as means by which deserving individuals who would otherwise be excluded from the benefits of higher education are provided opportunities. Militant appeasement, window dressing, implementation of pet ideas by individuals of missionary zeal or the establishment of power bases to manipulate individuals, heighten the alienation of students, and create an environment hostile to individual growth.

I attended the Caucus of Black Financial Aid Officers, January 30-February 1, 1971 at East Lansing in Michigan. I heard overtones of subjectivity in the awarding of scholarship and financial aid grants and the absence of realism in the supervision of expenditures by students. I came away concluding that if what I heard was representive of financial aid administration, then successful designs for failure by recipients was very much a reality. What will it do to our campuses to establish thereon a miniature welfare state? How do you realistically deal with recipients of financial aid whose families are suffereing in deprivation and may call upon the student to share funds? We have quietly said that some problems in the realm of scholarship and financial aid may be solved through "benign neglect."

Financial packages are not wrapped void of the biases of the packager. How can we neutralize these? Do scholarship awards show ethnic discrimination? If the environment is one in which the individual is respected and his personal situation considered, the scholarship and financial aid program must show meaningful and purposeful administration.

D. Standards of Personal Behavior become a matter of communicating to members of the college community those requirements which are deemed necessary for effective functioning. If the requirements are democratically established, properly interpreted to each population (student, faculty, and administration), and revised as situation dictate, acceptance should be assured. Each of us needs an authority source to help us establish control of our basic emotional impluses. A disciplined self is a self of power. If there is a single trait or the absence thereof which is the difference between success and failure in college, it is self discipline. Adolescent rebellion has caused us to abandon efforts directed toward behavior control or modification. I often remarked during my student personnel administration career that I was a good administrator because I usually found out what students were determined to do and gave them permission. Good to whom? Good for what?

Student handbooks abound with regulations from use of firearms to number and dates for visits home. The source of regulations whether they are anticipatory or reactionary, the extent to which they are enforceable, and the population to which they are applicable, stand out as matters of concern.

Whether a student body is "lawless" or "conforming" greatly influences the kind of environment which obtains. Some juvenile officers contend that juvenile detention homes are training centers for penitentiaries; some people are charging that the permissiveness of institutions of higher learning is the encouragement of rebellion and militancy which is so prevalent in today's society. In the realm of personal conduct of students we have been greatly involved in decision making. What has been

our goals? If we seek protection and cultivation of the human conscience and the human spirit some degree of moral commitment which manifests itself in external behaviors is essential. Student personnel administrators and campus ministries must respond or our campuses become quasi-political states. I recommend for your reading F. Cyril James, "Some Basic Problems that Confront Universities in All Parts of the World."[7]

E. Student Activities and the University Calendar of Events often keep the students so occupied that they never get an opportunity to apply themselves to academic work. In other institutions a suitcase population has developed out of efforts by students and faculty to escape the stresses and boredom of the environment. Balance for maximum effectiveness is suggested by this observation. There should be activities to meet the interests of the various sub-cultures thus variety is further suggested. Activities should complement and supplement those of the local community rather than compete. The vested interests of various groups can cripple the great potential which activities hold for providing additional life experiences. Assertion of one's self, developing intimacy with others, competing with others and the whole concept of self exploration are greatly enhanced through student activities. Engineering experiences is what Kenneth Matheny suggests such that individuals may gleam personal meaning from feeling arising out of interaction with the concrete elements of the environment.[8] Expansion of human awareness is an appropriate term employed by Foulds and Guinan.[9]

The campus calendar should reflect consistency of activities with the goals of the institution. The procedures for obtaining dates and places for activities should be made explicit such that those groups

which serve a limited number of students but adequately are not denied request in favor of the outmoded organization which persist in name only. Perhaps somebody should entitle an article the "County Carnival Goes to College." Our calendars seem to reflect amusement as its goal rather than continuing or expanding the benefits derived from higher education. Committee approval of Calendar Events and Activities tends to promote a more democratic and balance atmosphere.

F. Inter-Personal Relations (student and staff) in institutional life is at the heart of student growth. Without warm associations student assume mechanical roles which they are forced to play, none of which touch the innermost self but all of them separating man from self, leaving him existentially missing in action.[10] If students are immersed in their own behavior, overly concerned about the impression they have upon others and insistent upon getting their point across, they are not in real relationship with the people immediately around them. One does not become a hypoblack in an environment populated with personalities with which he interacts. Whether one is called Mexican-American, Latin-American, American of Mexican desent becomes less important as the degree of interaction with faculty and students increases.

Accessbility is the crucial element in interaction. "It means more than simply to say to students, 'Feel free to come and see me.' It requires an institutional climate where talking with faculty members is legitimized, where students feel free to 'take up professor's valuable time,' "...[11]

Techniques for Influencing the Environment

Peter F. Drucker offers comments which are appropriate to begin this part of the discussion:

> This means that the new generation and my generation are going to be horribly frustrated working together. They rightly expect us, their elders and betters, to practice some of the things that we preach. We don't dream of it. We preach knowledge and system and order, since we never had them. But we go by experience, the one thing we do have. We feel frustrated and lost because, after devoting half our lifetimes to acquiring experience, we still don't really understand what we're trying to do. The young are always in the right, because time is on their side. And that means we have to change.[12]

Techniques for influencing the environment should include alliance with administration, faculty coalition, student involvement, individual manipulation, and modeling.

A. Alliance With The Administration

Bronfenbrenner contends that any appreciable enduring improvement in the individual's development can be effected only through an appreciable enduring change in the environment and behavior of the persons intimately associated with the individual on a day to day basis.[13] This tends to suggest that if we can get residence hall directors, classroom teachers, and first echelon personnel imbued with concepts of the helping profession, then the desired relationships may ensue. Administrators by virtue of their special position have the potential for fostering integrity or cynicism and disillusionment. These individuals should not be mere distant figures who are seen by students at Freshman Orientation and Commencement and are therefore seldom spoken to directly.

The average tenure of college presidents across the nation is currently less than four years. This fact encourages student personnel administrators to minimize the effectiveness of the top administrator and his appointees, but the tide is more important than the ripples or the waves and is the environment indicator with which we must deal.

Scammon and Wattenberg declare that, "It can safely be said that the only extreme that is attractive to the large majority of American voters is the extreme center."[14] This may very well describe the majority of a university faculty and moving them in new direction or toward the creation of a new environment will require all of the influence one can muster. Power and influence by association with administrators involves techniques which are the outgrowth of one's concern for the welfare of others. The voucher system is best. This involves cashing in credits you have acquired through some previous deeds or service. Administrators who regard student personnel administrators as threats and are made to feel jealous of your relationships with students will let you ride out storms without their aid and will set about to neutralize the institutional climates which you seek to establish. Note: People including college administrators fight with the weapons which are at their disposal.

B. Faculty Coalition can greatly reduce student discontent and increase the pool of resources available for dealing with environmental problems. Speaking on the Role of the Faculty in Universities recently, Arthur Bestor, Professor of History at the University of Washington, said that "responsible" faculty members must firmly refuse to accept as permanent the alterations in curriculum and goverance which administrators and trustees acting under intimidation and often in panic have imposed upon the university without genuine faculty deliberations . . . ."[15] This may mean that student personnel administrators may find themselves the arbitrators in academic and institutional disputes of students and faculty members if they cannot calm the brewing storms.

May I suggest that we stop pretending to faculty members that we have some special mystique in working with students which they are not

capable of understanding and that if they could understand it, we would not divulge the closely guarded secrets to them. The rapidly developing presence of campus ombudsmen and the favorable responses they are receiving suggest a new approach in the utilization of non-titled faculty colleagues.

I further recommend that we involve more faculty members by working with them as they work with students. Student personnel administrators can obtain the multiplier effect if their attention is focused upon planned consultation with faculty sponsors and advisers. Clarify what is expected of faculty members and permit them to use their creativity in removing environmental barriers or erecting cautions and constraints. It is true that one can catch more flies with honey than with acid. Student personnel services can into existence because of the neglect of students and if it disappears from the pressured budgets of institutions it will be because of student neglect. Student neglect can be avoided through marshalling the resources of the entire faculty. Have you tried it?

C. Student Involvement in Influencing the environment is generally accepted verbally but not fully internalized. We have come to use the term, "involved significantly." There was a student on each of the various institutional committees who was outnumbered so greatly that his presence was tokenism in the ugliest sense. His feelings of futility led to frequent absenteeism which we interpreted as lack of interest in institutional affairs and argued against further appointment of students.

Students are not encumbered by the biases and dismal experiences which many of us have had. They have faith in the future. They are minus

the bills and burdens of daily living which we have heaped upon ourselves and are free to look at self and the institution candidly. They have the time and interest. If we can convince them that they are welcome in the Arena of Student Life, they will be there. On Saturday afternoon, February 26, I had the pleasure of hosting the Presidents of the student bodies of the Black colleges in the Southwest Athletic Conference. They were in Houston to organize or to form a coalition, stating that they had come to realize that their respective student bodies had more in common than athletic competition and it was time to pool their resources. I applauded their efforts and wished them well before they "aired up."*

When choice and flexibility are offered, when direct experiences are called for, when teaching is by discussion, and when evaluation involves frequent communication concerning the substance of behavior and performance, the ability to analyze and synthesize is fostered as are sense of competence, freeing of interpersonal relationships, and development of autonomy, identity and purpose.[16] This is perhaps the best description I could find of involvement of students in both their academic and non-academic pursuits.

Particular attention ought be given to the tendency to over involve those who say "Allah Be Praised" to those in administration while those who are dissenters are comptetely ostracized. Ostracism is the incubation period for alienation.

*Term denotes took flight

The parity concept is beautiful wherein involved parties convene on equal basis for decision making. Can we accept it? The secure personality can. The only reason to put distance between you and students is to make sure he does not come to know that you are not for real.

D. Individual Manipulation puts emphases upon the technique of environmental influencing rather than upon principles of management or human relations for the moment. When there is maladaptive behavior which the individual seeks to spread throughout the institution or engage in sabotage, the alternatives are clear. Either the individual is somehow manipulated into changing his responses or he is removed from the environment. The latter takes him out of our reach and halts our chances of further service. I therefore subscribe to manipulative efforts such as the shadowing technique where the student is assigned to a personality whose behavior he will emulate.

The individual may not cooperate in manipulative moves unless crises obtains. If one has violated his contractual agreement, his cooperation is obtained under a kind of duress. A change or roommates, attendance at a social or educational function, enrollment in a particular course, or dinner in the home of a faculty member represent possible manipulated inter-action which could bring about growth of the individual.

A student from Memphis, Tennessee described to me the great sorrow and hurt he experienced when his mother came home one day and announced that they were moving from Beale Street. This was at that time the center of entertainment and activity for the Black Community. He was also being asked to seek new acquaintances and to make new friends.

With some sixteen years having passed since the family moved, the young man could fully recognize that this move on the part of his mother was the best thing that could have ever happened to him.

Immediate comfort and satisfaction of students must not be sought at the expense of future success. Student personnel administrators are not expected to win popularity contests and they never will if they expertly engage in manipulation of individuals.

Some professional would regard manipulation of individuals as a poor choice of words and would conceivably offer management of personnel as substitutes. There need not be an exercise in language for Drucker advises that management science will always remain somewhat of an art; the talent experience, vision, courage, and character of managers will always be important factors in their performances and in that of their enterprises. He concludes that little work is being done on management as it relates to risk-making, risk-taking, and the decision-making job.[17]

This is to say that whether manipulation of individuals produces needed growth and free up the environment or increases the hostility and tension therein depends upon the status and degrees of acceptance of the manipulator in the community.

E. Modeling is just a suggestion that individuals be provided with examples of academic achievement, humaness, trust and confidence in others, supportive therapy, adult personalities, limits of authority, pursuit of multiple evaluative criteria. The behavior of others is contagious. Imitation is said to be its own reward. One takes on the actions of the model without inducement or compulsion. Modeling permits the influencing of a large number of individuals with a single carefu y selected personality. It further induces a behavior pattern which might otherwise never occur.

The potency of the model increases with the extent to which the model is perceived as possessing a high degree of competence, status, and control over resources according to Bronfenbreener.[18]

He further states that the most "contagious" models for the student are likely to be those who are the major sources of support and control in his environment; specifically, adults who play a prominent role in his everyday life.

The inductive power of the model increases with the degree to which the person perceives the model as similar to himself. (Underline due to my hearty endorsement).

Several models, exhibiting similar behavior, are more powerful inducers of change than a single model. (A minority in residence is not enough) The potency of the model is enhanced when the behavior exhibited is a salient feature in the actions of a group of which the student is already or aspires to be a member.[19]

Perceptions Regarding Effective Environments

It is possible to identify environments which promote the growth of particular groups of students and environments which are hostile to others. It would be unethical to list those institutions deemed as hostile camps by certain groups. May we proceed with positive identification?

Texas A & I University, Kingsville, Texas, has produced more Mexican-American teachers and administrators than any single institution according to a reputable group of Mexican-Americans. They view the institution as receptive, stimulating, and realistic. Blanket statments, relative to institutions are dangerous for descriptive terms usually

apply to areas of an institution or key people rather than the total community. Texas A & I is held in esteem by its Mexican-American population because of its informal counseling and professional guidance. It is felt by the students that there are key faculty personalities who believe in them and wish them well. They underscore classroom contacts and over coffee dialogues as significant experiences in their growth. Unorthodox personalities, faculty members, and administrators who are willing to be inconvenienced and do things differently were underscored as significant in their growth.

It is interesting to note that while the nation struggles with the problem of busing, and interesting experience in commuting to and from Texas A & I has prevailed for years. There is a car pool of approximately 200 cars which transport the Mexican-American students the seventy-six miles round trip daily.* Car pool schedules are more rigid than those of airlines thus defying the stereotyped notion of Mexican-American as insensitive to time. Those seeking ideas from a community which contributes to the development of Mexican-American students would do well to enlarge this profile of Texas A & I University.

Oberlin College is the productive environment for black students; but I am afraid its geographical location, history, and selection of student would render it atypical. If I were asked to identify southern Universities which have successfully designed a community with which blacks identify I would name Texas Women's University and Georgia State

*Corpus Christe to Texas A & I.

University in Atlanta. Student involvement, residence hall programs, staff recruitment, student admissions, and concern for the placement of graduates are their strong features.

Please note that remedial programs, heroic athlete, and special living arrangements have not been heralded by those who regard these institutions as positive environments.

I feel that the bases for our further discussion may concern itself with influencing the institutional environment, by whom and for whom. Higher education will either meet the challenge or alternatives to formal training will be found especially for time conscious minority groups.

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